

May 11 Read Psalm 124

Let us consider the first words of this psalm. Look at that first little word *if*. We think about a lot of *if*'s in our lives. How often do we not begin a sentence or more with the phrase "if only..."? How do any of those situations match up with "If it had not been the Lord..."? Without Jehovah God helping us, what would be the result for us? Israel needed to contemplate that fact as they went up to Mt. Zion to worship. We need to consider that fact as we live our lives on this earth. When all is said and done, we must conclude with the words of the last verse, "Our help is in the name of the Lord who made heaven and earth." Is that your confession, people of God? Do you cling to the name of Jehovah for all help in your lives? That is what we must do, and by God's grace we can. Sing Psalter 352.

May 12 Read Psalm 125

We do not think about mountains as places of defense for our earthly life, but for Israel the mountains on which Jerusalem was built were those places. They provided them protection from many enemies that came up against them. God gave to them those mountains as pictures of the defense that he gives to his people of all ages. For us the mountains of defense are his word, prayer, and worship. We can and must pray daily that God will do good for us. This good may not be what we would define as good, but rather it is the good that leads us to salvation and eventually to heavenly glory in the New Jerusalem. May this be our oft-repeated prayer for us and for all of God's people. Sing Psalter 354.

May 13 Read Psalm 126

We need to consider the context of this psalm. It seems to have been written as Israel was returning from the Babylonian captivity. Those people of God could easily say, "The Lord hath done great things for us." When we consider our lives, can we confess the same things? We may not understand how they are great, but they are in his sight. A death, an illness, and other so-called calamities may not seem like great things, but in God's sovereign plan they are. Great things are not to be judged by man's standards; they need to be weighed on the scale of God's counsel. He has done great things for us; let us be glad! Sing Psalter 357.

May 14 Read Psalm 127

As we read this psalm we become aware of at least two truths. First, we see that whatever we do is ordained by God, and the way in which it turns out is the way that he has ordained for us. We can do nothing in our lives apart from him and his help. The second truth concerns covenant children. They are given to us by God, and this includes the number and timing of them. They are a heritage to us in that

covenant, and they are signs of the blessing God has given to us in that blessed covenant of friendship and fellowship. Children are not burdens in the life of the believer; children are blessings to help throughout the way that God has ordained for us. Sing Psalter 359.

May 15 Read Psalm 128

This psalm either seems to be a companion of the one before it, or it was attached to it at one time. It again shows to the believer the happiness that is to be found in the blessedness of the covenant family. Young men, look for a wife who will help you in your way. This is not to be any wife, but it is to be a wife who can help you in the things of the Lord. Young women, seek a husband who will lead you in a way that God has ordained for his people. Seek for a husband who will help you raise a family in the fear of the Lord. This is the happy way for God's people, and there are many blessings to be found in such a way. Sing Psalter 360.

May 16 Read Psalm 129

Some writers have surmised that this psalm was written near the end of the Babylonian captivity. The unknown writer looks back at Israel's history and sees that it has been afflicted many times. This psalm would fit well with the theory that the psalms of degrees were used as Israel went back to Jerusalem from Babylon. I find the last verse extremely touching. Do we pronounce God's blessings on those of the church that need him the most? Let us pray for those who are in affliction, and let us go out of our way to help them in the time of their need. Sing Psalter 361.

May 17 Read Psalm 130

This psalm is one of those that have been labeled penitential psalms. It is a psalm the believer or the church can use when they feel the trials caused by sin overwhelming them. When the Christian is in the depths of despair, he can look toward the covenant God for deliverance from those depths. Just as someone who has been assigned the night watch eagerly looks for the morning, so the child of God looks for the safety which will come when the "sun of righteousness arises with healing in his wings". Even though our sins are great, God will not hold them against us as he looks at us through the blood of our blessed Savior, Christ Jesus. Watch, people of God, and watch in the hope of the dawning of the new heavens and the new earth. Sing Psalter 362.

May 18 Read Psalm 131

In this short psalm we find two main thoughts. First, David asserts that he has not been proud during his history. We know that in his later life his desire to number the people refutes this idea; therefore, this psalm was probably written during his flight from Saul or just after it. Being patient in the way that God leads us is the way not to be proud. When we are patient we can calm ourselves, knowing that all things are in God's hands and serve for our good. Second, David urges Israel and hence the church of all ages to trust in the Lord. When our trust is in Jehovah, we will be able to fight the sin of pride. Let this be our desire throughout our lives. Sing Psalter 366.

May 19 Read Psalm 132

Commentators are divided on both the author and the occasion of this psalm. Some say it written by David as he was making preparations for the building of the temple. Others say it was written by Solomon for the dedication of the temple. It obviously has the idea of the temple in mind and the zeal that David had for that temple. It also states that the temple was to be God's dwelling place. But there is a truth that we must not miss. The psalmist calls on God's promises that David's line will continue until Christ comes. Israel had to call upon those promises amidst much turmoil in their history. We can be assured in those promises that Christ has come and will come again to receive us unto his dwelling place. Sing Psalter 368.

May 20 Psalm 133

In this psalm we have an admonition to live together with our brothers and sisters in the church in unity. David is not writing this to the world; he is not telling Israel to live in unity with the Philistines, but he commands Israel, God's covenant people, to live in harmony with each other. He shows how precious this unity is by two figures. In the second one he shows that that unit is as precious as the dew from the mountains surrounding Jerusalem. Israel could not live without that dew, and neither can the church live without harmony within it. Finally the psalmist reminds us that that unity brings a blessed reward from God. Let us seek that unity; let us pray for it daily; and let us be the cause of that precious unity that is sweet-smelling to God. Sing Psalter 369.

May 21 Psalm 134

This is a fitting doxology to the fifteen psalms of degrees. Notice that three times the word "bless," meaning "to speak well of someone," is used. In the first two men are called to bless the Lord. While there is a direct reference to those who did service in the temple, we are all priests in the office of believer. We are called to care for his holy things and to speak well of our God as we are carrying out this

office. The final “bless” is a blessing from God upon his people. As we serve him in whatever office he has blessed us, there is a promised blessing from the creator of all things. Let us seek that blessing as we do his will every day. Sing Psalter 372.

May 22 Psalm 135

Men are unsure who the author of this psalm of praise is, and it does not matter. As a psalm of praise it could have been written by any of the psalmists for Israel at any stage of their history. Israel and the church of all ages is called upon to praise God for who he is. He is the God who has made us his people. He preserves us just as he preserved Israel throughout its history. He is a living God in opposition to the dead gods of the heathen. The psalm ends with another call to praise God by all in his church at all times. Is this our desire? Do we praise God every day and every hour of every day that we live on this earth? This is our calling from God. Sing Psalter 375.

May 23 Psalm 136

This psalm is not filled with vain repetitions as many so-called songs of praise are today. This psalm was composed for a type of worship in Jerusalem and may be used with great profit for us to day. This antiphonal psalm was penned to be performed by two groups of people. While one chanted the reason for praise from Israel’s history, the second responded with why God was so gracious. Today we must see that God’s mercy extends to us throughout our lives. After realizing this fact we must give thanks to that great God whose mercy indeed endures forever. Sing Psalter 378.

May 24 Psalm 137

Some would not have us read this psalm, especially the words of the last verse. More would not have us sing its sad, melancholy words. But the child of God has been given this psalm to use in worship and in daily devotions. He has been given this psalm to help him in his spiritual pilgrimage on this earth. We are all in Babylon. This is not our home. Our home is the new Jerusalem. Many there are who would mock us by asking us to sing our songs of praise to Jehovah. We may never forget our real home and our God. We must sing Zion’s songs. Finally, we must pray for God’s vengeance on his enemies and the enemies of his church. Let this psalm instruct us as we await the journey to the new Jerusalem. Sing Psalter 379.

May 25 Psalm 138

This psalm of David seems to have been penned in the latter part of his life. In it he thanks God for giving to him his place in the kingdom. He calls himself to praise God, and he calls God’s people to praise him.

It is good for us to look back to see what God has done for us in our lives. We must see the manifold goodness that God has bestowed upon us. After musing on those things, can we not help but break out in songs of praise to our gracious covenant God? Sing Psalter 381.

May 26 Read Psalm 139

David begins and ends this psalm with the same thought: that God searches him. In the first part of the psalm he asserts that God has searched him and knows him in all his sins and weaknesses. David knows that God has caused his formation from the moment of conception. This knowledge causes David to extol God's greatness. David seems to be writing this when he is under attack of wicked men. Even in trouble David confesses God to be the great sovereign God. Finally, David ends the psalm by asking God to continue to search him. Like David, we must make this prayer, for in it we place all our trust in God to bring us to glory and appear before him washed in the blood of the lamb. Sing Psalter 384.

May 27 Read Psalm 140

This psalm of David, as well as the next three psalms, seems to have been written as David was fleeing from Saul. First, he calls upon God's name as his God. Then he calls upon God to deliver him from his persecutors, and he prays for their destruction. David can do this because he knows God is a righteous God and a just God. We must have that confidence as well, as we go through life in this valley of the shadow of death. Finally, David expresses his trust in God as the deliverer of his people even from death, as God takes them to dwell with him in heaven. Sing Psalter 385.

May 28 Read Psalm 141

David seems to have written this psalm during the same time period as the previous one. David is in distress. What does he do? He prays. We need to learn from David. Each of us has distresses in this life. We must learn to lift our eyes unto Jehovah in prayer. We learn that prayer is the chief means of thankfulness for the child of God. It is also a chief means for us to come boldly to the throne of grace and lay our needs before our sovereign God. Let us pray without ceasing, knowing that our covenant God hears our prayers and will answer them. Sing Psalter 386.

May 29 Read Psalm 142

Once again we have a prayer of David. David pours out his heart unto God while he is on the run, most likely from Saul. David realized that his help could only come from God. He was in a place in which no deliverance could come from any other source. Notice why he wished to be delivered. It is not for his

good or his future life. No, David's one desire is that he can praise God with the church. Is that our desire when we are in distress? Do we wish for deliverance in order that we can praise our deliverer, Jehovah God? Sing Psalter 388.

May 30 Read Psalm 143

This psalm, like the ones before it, are written when David is in trouble because of some enemy. Which enemy this is has been a matter of speculation. The thoughts that David penned could be uttered under many circumstances in his life. While we may not have the physical enemies as David did, we do have enemies sent against us by the enemy, Satan. David longs for spiritual help in his fight. This we must do as well. We would do well to reread this prayer in order to gain guidance for our prayers day by day. Sing Psalter 391.

May 31 Read Psalm 144

This psalm of thanksgiving and supplication seems to have been written after David ascended to the throne in Jerusalem. He is thankful for victories over his enemies and asks for continued help in defeating the enemies of God and his church. There are many phrases that we can use in our prayers; in fact, some of the statements found in this psalm are found in others. Near the end of the psalm David says that the reason for his prayer is that the nation of Israel can be blessed. He prays for the salvation of his children and the children of God's church. These sentiments we must bring into our prayers. Our children and all of the covenant children need our prayers in the wicked world in which we live. Sing Psalter 393.

June 1 Read Psalm 145

The final six psalms are psalms of praise. We see this in the titles, we see this in the words, and we see this in the subject matter. This particular one is an alphabetical one in that each verse begins with a letter of the Hebrew alphabet except one. In this psalm we have a call to praise, and we have reasons that we should praise Jehovah. As you read through it, did any particular verse stir you to praise Jehovah? We need such psalms so that we are daily reminded of our calling to praise God from whom all blessings flow. Sing Psalter 397.

June 2 Read Psalm 146

This is a personal call to praise. David, who most commentators seem to think wrote this psalm, calls his soul to praise the Lord. This is where we must start. Every day we must remind ourselves to praise Jehovah for all the manifold goodness he has bestowed upon us. We praise him and not some other

authority because he is the sovereign one. We praise him because he has created all things. (An evolutionist cannot praise God.) We praise him because he alone has the power to do all things. Each day let us praise Jehovah our mighty God. Sing Psalter 400.

June 3 Read Psalm 147

There are at least three thoughts to be found in this psalm. First, we must praise God in our singing. This means what we sing must praise God and only God. Then in the manner in which we sing, we must show that we truly believe that we must praise God. Physically we must open our mouths and sing so that others hear us. Second, we praise God for his works. Here in the northern climes we must understand that the snow and ice storms that he sends are reasons to praise God. They are his, and not only does he send snow and ice, but he also sends the warm spring winds to melt away that ice. Finally, only his people have a reason to praise him. Sing Psalter 402.

June 4 Read Psalm 148

As the psalmist looked around all parts of creation, he noticed that all of God's created beings were called to praise him. Article 12 of the Belgic Confession sets forth this truth. Take the time read the article, especially the first paragraph. Every flower praises God with its beauty. Every animal in its function on this earth sings a song of praise to its maker. That is why Paul in the book of Romans says that creation groans as it awaits the second coming of Christ. Finally, the psalmist calls all kinds of men to praise God. God has chosen his people from all walks of life. They all have the same common calling: Praise the Lord. Do you obey this calling? Sing Psalter 405.

June 5 Read Psalm 149

Another reason for praise as we find it in this psalm is that God has redeemed us from all of our enemies, and especially the enemy of sin. We need to praise our God for such redemption. Adam tried to redeem himself with the work righteousness of fig leaves. God had to show him that he needed to be covered with the skin of an animal. This meant that blood had to be shed. We cannot be redeemed through our works; all are filthy rags, according to Isaiah. We must be redeemed by the blood of the slain Lamb, our Lord Jesus Christ. As redeemed ones we must praise him who provided such redemption. Sing Psalter 407.

June 6 Read Psalm 150

This psalm forms a grand doxology for the last six psalms, the fifth book of the psalms, and, of course, the whole of the psalms. It first gives reasons that we must praise God. Then it tells us how to praise God.

Finally, it tells us who must praise God. The psalms give to us much material to aid us in our lives here on this earth. For this material we must praise God. This psalm, like the ones before it, begins and ends with the words, "Praise ye the Lord." In the Hebrew that word is hallelujah. In our first day in heaven we will join that huge heavenly choir singing unceasing hallelujahs. Are you ready to sing? Sing Psalter 409.

June 7 Read Proverbs 1

We come to another of the books of poetry. Most of these words were penned by David's wise son, Solomon. We can find much wisdom for practical everyday life. But we also find much to lead us on our spiritual journey in this life. In the first chapter we are instructed that the fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom. What kind of wisdom do you desire? There is only one kind for the child of God. It is not found in the thoughts of man; it is to be found in God's thoughts transmitted to us by the Holy Spirit. The wisest thing that we can do in this life is to flee from sin and seek God. That is the instruction of Solomon to his son. Do we instruct our children in this way? Sing Psalter 41.

June 8 Read Proverbs 2

The walk of those who seek only true wisdom must be an antithetical walk. This is not a popular teaching today. We are told to amalgamate with the world in order to help the world. This was not Solomon's teaching to his son. In order to understand God's wisdom, we must walk in his ways all the days of our lives. We cannot join with the world in its entertainments or its teachings. We must seek Jehovah in all that we do. Only in this way will we find the proper way to live and to obey God, the giver of all wisdom. Sing Psalter 24.

June 9 Read Proverbs 3

Do you really understand what verse 5 means? I do not mean just its words, but also the manner in which the command must be carried out. Trusting in God alone is a calling found throughout Scripture. When Jacob, David, Peter put their trust in other but God, they had disastrous results. This is true for us as well. If we put our trust in some earthly idea, we will find that we will walk into some trouble. If we try to "pull ourselves up by our own bootstraps" in many things, especially those spiritual, we will come to sad ends. Trust in the Lord, people of God, in that way we will enjoy all the blessings of salvation. Sing Psalter 73.

June 10 Read Proverbs 4

Many of these first chapters of Proverbs are addressed to "My son." As parents we must follow Solomon's example and entreat our children to follow the ways of the Lord. We must implore them to

seek after the wisdom that comes from above and is far greater than any wisdom of this world. As children and young people we must obey our parents and seek that sort of wisdom. As we do this, we must remember the fifth commandment. It is a commandment with promise, as Paul says. Seeking the true wisdom of Jehovah will have an end that is far glorious than anything on this earth. Sing Psalter 89.